

Message Text

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41

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 045473

O R 311310Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4428

INFO US DEL PARIS 5764

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 3861

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2 (DECONTROL DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE)

TAGS: VS, PINT

SUBJECT: MAJORITY OF UPPER HOUSE CALL FOR EMERGENCY SESSION

REF: A) SAIGON 3169; B) SAIGON 3638

1. THIRTY EIGHT MEMBERS OF UPPER HOUSE, COMPRISING BOTH PRO-ADMINISTRATION AND OPPOSITION SENATORS, ON MAR 28 PRESENTED "BRIEF ON THE STATE OF THE NATION" TO CHAIRMAN TRAN VAN LAM AND CALLED FOR EMERGENCY SESSION OF THE UPPER HOUSE. CHAIRMAN LAM HAS AGREED TO HOLD SUCH SESSION APRIL 4.

2. SEVEN PAGE BRIEF FOR SESSION (SENT SEPTTEL) HAS BEEN DRAFTED IN LARGE PART BY SENATORS TON THAT DINH, TRAN QUANG THUAN, LE CHAU LOC AND HOANG XUAN HAO. OTHERS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING INCLUDE SENATORS NGUYEN VAN AN, TON THAT NIEM, AND TRAN TAN TOAN. THROUGH PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS DURING PAST WEEK BRIEF WAS EVENTUALLY DRAWN UP WHICH WAS ACCEPTABLE TO MANY MEMBERS BOTH PRO-GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION MEMBERSHIP. UNDERLINING RECOGNITION BY SENATE OF CRISIS SITUATION, THIS IS FIRST TIME IN HISTORY OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SECOND REPUBLIC THAT BOTH SIDES OF AISLE HAVE PUT THEIR NAMES TO SUCH A PROPOSAL WHICH CARRIES ALMOST TWO THIRDS OF THE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP.

3. BRIEF DOES NOT SUGGEST SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS TO CURRENT CRISIS BUT SUCH PROPOSALS WILL PROBABLY BE ENUNCIATED DURING PLENARY SESSION LATER THIS WEEK. BRIEF COMMENCES WITH REFERENCES TO DETERIORATING
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MILITARY SITUATION AND NOTES THAT "THE INSECURE SITUATION WHICH

FOLLOWED ON THE HEELS OF THE SOCIAL/ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY HAS CAUSED THE PEOPLE TO LOSE CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY LOATHE AND FEAR THE COMMUNISTS."

4. THE BRIEF THEN ATTRIBUTES CURRENT "GLOOMY SITUATION" TO BOTH EXTERNAL AND DOMESTIC FACTORS. THE EXTERNAL FACTORS INCLUDE COMMUNISTS' SYSTEMATIC VIOLATION OF PARIS AGREEMENT; INPOTENCE OF ICCS; PASSIVE ATTITUDE OF THE SIGNATORIES OF THE AGREEMENT AND " THE US NOT KEEPING ITS PROMISE TO THE RVN". INTERNAL CAUSES OF THE CRISIS INCLUDE LACK OF IDEAS OF THE "NATIONALIST AND PUBLIC PERSONALITIES"; EXCESSIVE CONCENTRATION OF POWER; LACK OF RESPONSIBILITY BY GOVERNMENT; PARALYSIS OF VARIOUS CONSITUTIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, SUPREME COURT AND THE INSPECTORATE; AND THREE PARALLEL SYSTEMS OF CORRUPTION: ADMINISTRATIVE, MILITARY AND NATIONAL CORPORATIONS. "MANY MEASURES WHICH ARE DISCOURAGING TO THE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED; ARREST AND DETENTION HAVE BEEN ABUSED, PRESS CONFISCATION AND PROSECUTION HAVE BEEN DISORDERLY, NEWSPAPERS ARE CLOSED ILLEGALLY AND THE GENERAL MOBILIZATION LAW HAS BEEN APPLIED TOO BROADLY WITH THE RESULT THAT CARRYING OUT ONE'S MILITARY OBLIGATION HAS BECOME A POLITICAL CONSIDERATION."

5. WHILE GLOOMY THE SITUATION IS NOT "DESPERATE" BECAUSE OF FIVE "SVN STRENGTHS". THESE STRENGTHS INCLUDE AN ANTI-COMMUNIST SENIMENT ON THE PART OF THE POPULATION; THE ABANDONMENT BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE OF A PEOPLE'S WAR FOR A TERRITORIAL WAR, "A STRATEGY WHICH IS NOT THEIR STRONG POINT"; A RESERVOIR OF TALENT WITHIN SVN; DETERMINATION AND SPIRIT OF POPULATION TO RESIST ALL TOO CLEAR DANGER; AND ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCES, SKILL, INDUSTRY AND PATIENCE OF THE SVN PEOPLE.

6. THE BRIEF SUGGESTS THAT GENERAL DISCUSSION IN THE UPPER HOUSE MOVE TOWARD CONCRETE SENATE RESOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD INCORPORATE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:) THE PEOPLE'S THIRST FOR PEACE MUST BE RESPECTED; 2) HONESTY AND PERSEVERANCE MUST BECOME MOTTOS FOR ACTION; 3) A UNIFIED AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT IS REQUIRED; AND 4) GOVERNMENT MUST HAVE ADEQUATE ABILITY TO ACT WITH AMPLE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE SPIRIT OF THE 1967 CONSTITUTION AND MUST WORK CLOSELY WITH THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE SUPREME INTERESTS OF THE NATION AND "STABILIZE THE MILITARY, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION ON AN URGENT BASIS."

7. EMBASSY CONTACTS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY DO NOT YET KNOW WHAT CONCLUSION THE UPPER HOUSE WILL DRAW FROM DISCUSSION OF THE BRIEF. THREE ALTERNATIVES HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN DISCUSSED DURING THE PAST WEEK BY CRITICS OF ADMINISTRATION. THE FIRST OF THESE ENVISAGES THAT PRESIDENT THIEU RESIGN BUT THE PRESENT

CABINET REMAIN IN OFFICE; THE SECOND THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD RESIGN AND THAT THE CABINET SHOULD BE CHANGED; AND THE THIRD THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD STAY AND THE CABINET RESIGN.

8. OUR CONTACTS AMONG LESS COMMITTED PRO-GOVERNMENT MEMBERS CLAIM THAT A CONCURRENCE HAS DEVELOPED AROUND A REQUEST FOR AN ENTIRELY NEW CABINET. SENATOR LE CHAU LOC, ON THE OTHER HAND, TELLS US HE STILL HOPES TO GET A MAJORITY TO VOTE FOR A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR PRESIDENT THIEU'S RESIGNATION.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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O R 311310Z MAR 75
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4429
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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 3861

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

9. SENATOR LAM TELLS US ONLY 17 OF SIGNERS ARE IN OPPOSITION AND THAT 11 OF PRO-GOVERNMENT SENATORS WHO SIGNED WERE NOT AWARE OF CRITICAL ASPECTS OF SUBSTANCE OF BRIEF AND NOW DISAGREE WITH IT AND WILL DISAVOW IT DURING DEBATE. HE ALSO NOTED THAT WHILE 43 SENATORS SIGNED ORIGINAL CALL FOR DEBATE, FIVE SUBSEQUENTLY WITH-DREW NAMES. LAM FELT, HOWEVER, THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO AVOID DEBATE ENTIRELY AND WAS DOUBTFUL IT COULD BE LED TO PRODUCE STATEMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY.

10. COMMENT; MANY MEMBERS OF THE UPPER HOUSE HAVE FELT FRUSTRATED IN THEIR POSITION ON THE SIDELINES DURING THE PRESENT CRISIS. MOST ARE MEN WHO HAVE HAD CONSIDERABLE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE ARVN, GOVERNMENT OR BUSINESS COMMUNITY WHICH GIVES THEM EXPERTISE WHICH THEY WISH TO EXERCISE TO MEET THE COMMUNIST CHALLENGE. A TYPICAL SENATORIAL COMMENT IS, "I MUST DO SOMETHING TO HELP MY COUNTRY." THUS, THEY HAVE COME UP WITH IDEA OF EMERGENCY SESSION OF UPPER HOUSE. THE BRIEF,

ALTHOUGH CONTAINING MATERIAL CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT, IS RELATIVELY STATESMANLIKE, NON-POLEMIC IN TONE AND ATTEMPTS TO BRING SENATE ACTION TO RESPOND TO COMMUNIST CHALLENGE.

11. THIS ACTION REPRESENTS A GROUPING OF OPPOSITION SENATORS, A GOOUP OF PRO-GOVERNMENT SENATORS WHO HAVE LONG BEEN DISSATISFIED WITH GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND WHO HAVE STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT WANTING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PLAY GREATER ROLE IN POLITICAL LIFE OF COUNTRY, AND A NUMBER OF NORMALLY RELIABLE PRO-GOVERNMENT
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SENATORS.

12. THE GOVERNMENT IS BOVIOUSLY PUTTING THE PRESSURE ON THE PRO-GOVERNMENT SIGNERS AND IT SEEMS MOST UNLIKELY TO US THAT DEBATE WILL RESULT IN CALL FOR RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT THIEU. RESULTS COULD BE CALL FOR NEW CABINET AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION UNDER A CIVILIAN PRIME MINISTER. WE BELIEVE THAT A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY OF THE UPPER HOUSE PROBABLY FAVORS SOME FORM OF "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION." IN VIEW OF THE CONSTRUCTIVE TONE OF THE LATTER PART OF THE REPORT ON WHICH THE DABATE WILL BE BASED, A MODERATE RESOLUTION MAY FINALLY EMERGE WHICH INCLUDES A CALL FOR NATIONAL UNITY AS WELL AS FOR REFORM; AND CALLS FOR THIEU'S RESIGNATION, IF MADE, WILL COME ONLY FROM OPPOSITION MEMBERS SUCH AS VU VAN MAU AND LE CHAU LOC. DEBATE MAY IN FACT CONTRIBUTE TO FORMATION OF A MORE WIDELY BASED GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD BRING GREATER SENSE OF UNITY TO THE NATION IN ITS PRESENT PERIL AND EMBASSY IS QUIETLY AND UNOBTRUSIVELY WORKING TOWARD THIS GOAL.
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